



# IEP Facilitation

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*Effective Collaboration and Shared Problem Solving through Facilitation*

*Presented by Arizona Department of Education Dispute Resolution*

## fa·cil·i·tate

*verb* \fə-'si-lə-,tāt\

: to make (something) easier

: to help (something) run more smoothly and effectively

## fa·cil·i·ta·tor

*noun* \fə-'si-lə-,tā-tər\

: one that [facilitates](#); *especially*: one that helps to bring about an outcome (as learning, productivity, or communication) by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance, or supervision

IEP facilitation is a student-focused process in which a trained individual (facilitator) assists the individualized education program (IEP) team in developing an IEP that provides a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to the student.

The Arizona Department of Education/Dispute Resolution Unit believes there are three components needed to facilitate a successful IEP meeting: standardized meeting practices, knowledge of the IEP process, and the use of meeting management skills that aid in minimizing conflict and maximizing collaboration. This training is designed to teach these three components.

# IEP TEAM MEMBERS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## **Parent**

- Provides perspective on the student's performance on school work outside of the school environment
- Shares information related to student's physical and emotional health
- Shares strategies/interventions that are successful in the home environment
- Provides parent perspective on instruction successes and/or needs
- Provides the link to outside therapies, etc., that can be shared with the team
- Assists in the development of all areas of the IEP

## **General education teacher**

- Provides information regarding grade level curriculum and typical student development
- Provides information regarding student's academic strengths and needs based on classroom performance
- Provides information regarding student's functional behavior (e.g. attention to tasks, interactions with peers, etc.) based on classroom observation
- Recommends accommodations and modifications that may benefit the student
- Provides insight regarding what has been successful and what has not
- Assists in the development of all areas of the IEP

## **Special education teacher**

- Provides information on possible strategies/interventions based on student's needs
- Provides recommendations regarding specially designed instruction to help student access and progress in the general curriculum
- Explains student's response to previous special education strategies and techniques
- Recommends accommodations and modifications that may benefit the student
- Assesses possible supports for school personnel and makes recommendations
- Provides ongoing support in the effective implementation of the IEP to all other team members
- Assists in the development of all areas of the IEP

## **Individual to explain evaluation results\***

- Provides information on the instructional implications of the most recent evaluation results
- Provides information on the instructional implications of academic and functional information provided by other team members at the meeting
- Provides recommendations regarding specially designed instruction to help student access and progress in the general curriculum
- Recommends accommodations and modifications that may benefit the student
- Assists in the development of all areas of the IEP

**Representative of the public school\***

- Identified by the public education agency as an individual that can provide, or supervise the provision of, special education
- Provides insight and information about the general curriculum
- Provides information regarding the availability of the school's resources
- Assists in the development of all areas of the IEP
- Authorized to commit the resources of the school
- These criteria are specifically described in the IDEA regulations.

**The Student**

- Provides own perspective on his/her education experience
- Shares his/her interests in education and employment
- Shares information about his/her strengths and how they support his/her goals
- Shares what supports he/she feels is needed to help make him/her successful both in school and in postsecondary life

**Outside Agency Representative (with parent's informed consent and release of information previously obtained)**

- Provides information about the agencies services and processes
- Shares information related to any services provided to the student that are currently provided or may be provided by the agency
- Shares results of any evaluations or assessments administered

\*IDEA regulations specify that these two roles may be fulfilled by another team member.

## SAMPLE PRE-MEETING PARENT CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Introduce yourself**
- ✓ **Describe a Facilitated IEP meeting** - A Facilitated Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is one in which:
  - An IEP is developed by a collaborative team whose members share responsibility for the meeting process and results.
  - An agenda and ground rules will be established prior to the meeting.
  - Decision-making and any conflicts that arise are managed through the use of facilitation skills.
- ✓ **Describe Your Role as a Facilitator** -
  - Helps keep members of the IEP team focused on the student and on developing an IEP that provides a FAPE to the student.
  - Assists the team to resolve conflicts and disagreements that may arise during the meeting.
  - Helps to maintain open communication among all members.
- ✓ **Clarify the parent role at the IEP meeting.**
- ✓ **Clarify how they would like to be addressed.**
- ✓ **Ask to first describe their child, describe their issues and then have them start thinking about possible solutions.** Encourage them to bring these solution ideas to the IEP meeting.
- ✓ **Elicit information about accommodations or special needs** (How can the facilitator help this situation for you? Will you need additional breaks for any reason? Translator?)
- ✓ **Obtain commitment from the family to allot adequate time for the meeting.**
- ✓ **Encourage parent to bring all relevant documentation to the meeting.**
- ✓ **If parents are divorced:**
  - Discuss current legal decision making status
  - Discuss who will be attending the meeting
- ✓ **Affirm commitment to participate in the FIEP process.**
- ✓ **Explain that you will email/mail agenda before the meeting for their review.**
- ✓ **If the student will be attending the meeting, ask to speak with the student and review the above Checklist with the student if appropriate.**

# **SAMPLE PRE-MEETING SCHOOL CHECKLIST**

(To be done by team leader with all team members)

- ✓ **Introduce yourself**
- ✓ **Describe a Facilitated IEP meeting-** A Facilitated Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is one in which:
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  - An agenda and ground rules will be established prior to the meeting.
  - Decision-making and any conflicts that arise are managed through the use of facilitation skills.
- ✓ **Describe Your Role as a Facilitator-**
  - Helps keep members of the IEP team focused on the student and on developing an IEP that provides a FAPE to the student.
  - Assists the team to resolve conflicts and disagreements that may arise during the meeting.
  - Helps to maintain open communication among all members.
- ✓ **Ask to explain their issues and then have them start thinking about possible solutions to these issues.**
- ✓ **Remind team members to adequately prepare the student for the meeting if they will be attending.**
- ✓ **Obtain commitment from the school to allot adequate time and space for the meeting.**
- ✓ **Confirm that all required team members will be present or excused appropriately, and that all team members understand their roles.**
- ✓ **Confirm that parent will receive meeting notice and draft IEP (if one will be provided) in a timely manner.**
- ✓ **Assign an IEP team member as timekeeper and IEP writer.**
- ✓ **Remind all team members to bring any needed forms and relevant documentation.**
- ✓ **Affirm commitment to participate in the FIEP process.**
- ✓ **Explain that you will email/mail agenda before the meeting for their review.**

## **SAMPLE PRE-MEETING OUTSIDE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVE (AR) CHECKLIST**

**\*\* Prior to any student specific conversation with an outside agency representative, ensure that the parent's informed consent and a release of information has been obtained. \*\***

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- ✓ **Describe a Facilitated IEP meeting-** A Facilitated Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is one in which:
  - An IEP is developed by a collaborative team whose members share responsibility for the meeting process and results.
  - An agenda and ground rules will be established prior to the meeting.
  - Decision-making and any conflicts that arise are managed through the use of facilitation skills.
- ✓ **Describe Your Role as a Facilitator-**
  - Helps keep members of the IEP team focused on the student and on developing an IEP that provides a FAPE to the student.
  - Assists the team to resolve conflicts and disagreements that may arise during the meeting.
  - Helps to maintain open communication among all members.
- ✓ **Have the AR give a brief description of their agency and of the potential services available to the student through that agency.**
- ✓ **If referral paperwork has been submitted, verify that it has been processed and entered into their case management system? If yes,**
  - Determine the status of the student's case and ask for a quick overview of the agency process (clarify what has happened and ask what is expected to happen next).
  - Ask the AR to describe the services that the student will be receiving.
  - Ask the AR if their agency has administered any evaluations or assessments that could assist in the development/ updating of the IEP transition plan.
- ✓ **Remind all team members to bring any needed forms and relevant documentation.**
- ✓ **Affirm commitment to participate in the FIEP process.**
- ✓ **Explain that you will email/mail agenda before the meeting for their review.**

## SAMPLE IEP MEETING AGENDA

- Welcome, Introduction and Roles
- Review ground rules, Parking lot, Action plan
- The IEP:
  - PLAAFP
  - Measurable annual goals
  - Services/supports
  - Educational placement
- Conclusion
- Procedural Safeguards
- Parking Lot, Action plan

Time Keeper:

IEP Writer:



## SAMPLE IEP GROUND RULES

*Communicate clearly and listen carefully*

*Respect the views of others*

*Share your views willingly*

*Ask and welcome questions*

*Be open to ideas and views presented*

*Honor time limits and stay on task*

1. Everyone will have an opportunity to speak without interruption.
  2. The IEP team will focus on the student and his/her unique needs.
  3. The IEP team members will treat each other with mutual respect and dignity.
  4. The IEP team will work together to develop an effective educational plan which is in the student's best interest.
  5. The IEP team will minimize "side conversations."
- Acknowledge team members as valuable participants.
  - Demonstrate reciprocal respect toward team members and their opinions.
  - Speak in turn so that valuable information can be considered.
  - Follow the Agenda.
  - Work together to reach consensus.
- The reason for the meeting is the student's educational needs.
  - Discussion will focus on the student's educational needs.
  - Everyone will be treated with respect.
  - Everyone will have the opportunity to participate/speak.
  - The person speaking will not be interrupted.
  - Plain language will be used as much as possible. Jargon/acronyms will be explained/defined by a speaker who uses them, to ensure that all team members understand what is being said.
  - Electronic devices (e.g. phones, tablets) that are not needed to participate in the meeting will be silenced and put away during the meeting.

# FACILITATOR OPENING STATEMENT CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Introductions-** Welcome the team members to the IEP meeting.
  - Introduce yourself.
  - Ask team members to introduce themselves, indicate how they would like to be addressed at the meeting, and explain their role at the meeting today.
- ✓ **Describe a Facilitated IEP meeting-** A Facilitated Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is one in which:
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  - An agenda and ground rules are established prior to the meeting.
  - Decision-making and any conflicts that arise are managed through the use of facilitation skills.
- ✓ **Describe Your Role as a Facilitator-**
  - Helps keep members of the IEP team focused on the student and on developing an IEP that provides a FAPE to the student.
  - Assists the team to resolve conflicts and disagreements that may arise during the meeting.
  - Helps to maintain open communication among all members.
- ✓ **Decision-making Information-** Discuss consensus
- ✓ **Logistical Information-** Location of restrooms, breaks, etc.
- ✓ **Time Expectations-** Clarify time set aside for the meeting and confirm that all team members are available for that length of time.
- ✓ **Ground Rules Establishment-** Review ground rules and obtain agreement from all team members to follow these rules.
- ✓ **Describe how information will be recorded for this meeting and the use of the “Parking Lot”**
- ✓ **Questions/Obtain Team Members’ Commitment to Continue**

## SAMPLE INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I will be your IEP facilitator today. To begin the meeting today, please tell us your full name and let us know how you would like to be referred to during this discussion. Also, please explain to us the role you play at this IEP meeting. Let me model what describing your role sounds like...

First let me explain what a facilitated IEP meeting is. A Facilitated Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting is one in which an IEP is developed by a collaborative team whose members share responsibility for the meeting process and results; and decision-making and any conflicts that arise are managed through the use of facilitation skills. I am here to facilitate this meeting to help keep members of the IEP team focused on the student and on developing an IEP that provides the student a FAPE (free appropriate public education). I will also assist the team in resolving conflicts and disagreements that may arise during the meeting.

I would like to remind you that this meeting will use a collaborative process to make decisions. We will discuss options and strive for consensus about the student's program and services; working together to develop an IEP that we can agree is in the best interest of the student.

Let me check with you about time. The IEP meeting is scheduled to last for two hours today. I have made myself available for this time and want to make sure that you are all available for this whole session. We will take breaks if needed during this time. The rest rooms are [indicate where].

The following ground rules are important to the facilitated IEP process:

1. Communicate clearly and listen carefully.
2. Respect the views of others.
3. Share your views willingly.
4. Ask and welcome questions.
5. Be open to ideas and views presented.
6. Honor time limits and stay on task. Can we all agree to follow these ground rules?

Does anyone have any questions about the process, my role, or anything else at this time?

Ok, let's begin the meeting with a review of the agenda that was forwarded to you last week...

## SAMPLE ACTION PLAN

What	Who	By When
Distribute IEP copies to parent and school	Janet	March 6
Mr. Smith to schedule meeting with Sara to discuss lunchroom concerns	Mr. Smith	March 9